

VZCZCXRO3498  
OO RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHC #8765/01 2320141  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O P 190135Z AUG 08  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 2445  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE 1352  
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI IMMEDIATE 7380  
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE 0814  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 9150  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 3701  
RUEHOU/AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU IMMEDIATE 7559  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 2985  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0518  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE 0360  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 7551  
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE 9116  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE 2323  
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB IMMEDIATE 1332  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 2800  
INFO UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 1601  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 9419  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 5436

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 088765

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/17/2018  
TAGS: [UNSC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [MO](#) [WI](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST: PRESSING FOR A FIFTH ROUND OF  
WESTERN SAHARA TALKS

REF: A. USUN 369 (NOTAL)  
[1](#)B. ALGIERS 483 (NOTAL)  
[1](#)C. USUN 558 (NOTAL)  
[1](#)D. USUN 717 (NOTAL)  
[1](#)E. RABAT 1873 (NOTAL)

Classified By: IO Acting A/S Brian Hook for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

-----  
SUMMARY  
-----

[1](#)1. (C) Department requests action addressees to demarche host government counterparts and their representatives in New York at an appropriate level to urge the UN to hold a fifth round of talks on Western Sahara this Fall and to allow Peter Van Walsum to lead these talks in his capacity as the Western Sahara envoy of the UN Secretary-General (UNSYG). Posts may draw on talking points in paragraph 7 in delivering this demarche. Department believes this action is needed to maintain the direction and momentum of UNSCR 1813 and previous resolutions in order to further the process towards a mutually-acceptable solution to the Western Sahara conflict. End summary.

-----  
OBJECTIVES  
-----

[1](#)2. (C/REL ACTION ADDRESSEES) Department instructs action addressees to pursue the following objectives:

-- Persuade the UN to call for a fifth round of Western Sahara talks this year, possibly in October or November, following the UNGA;

-- Persuade the UN to renew Peter Van Walsum's contract as the UNSYG's Western Sahara envoy, or, if that is not possible, allow him to continue in his role after the expiration of his contract until a suitable replacement can be found, at least through the end of the calendar year.

-----

REPORTING DEADLINE

13. (SBU) Action addressees should report results of efforts by cable to IO/UNP desk officer Joseph Fitzgerald and NEA/MAG Morocco desk officer Randall Kaailau by August 20, 2008.

BACKGROUND

14. (C) Following UN Special Envoy Peter Van Walsum's April 21 statement to the Security Council noting the "political reality" that "an independent Western Sahara is not an attainable goal" (ref A), representatives of both the Polisario and Algeria said privately that they had lost confidence in Van Walsum and would not attend talks facilitated by him (ref B). The Polisario made its first public statement to that effect on July 30; as the Polisario had not formally requested Van Walsum's dismissal, the UN Secretariat chose to ignore the statement. Publicly, the UN's position remains that Van Walsum continues to be the UNSYG's Western Sahara envoy and remains engaged in planning next steps. Privately, we understand the UN wants to preserve the political process, and is searching for a way to let Van Walsum go quietly, so as to minimize the appearance

STATE 00088765 002 OF 003

that Van Walsum's departure is connected with his assessment (ref C). UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe told USUN Ambassador Alexander Wolff August 7 that Van Walsum's contract would not be renewed once it expired August 21 (ref D). However, given the Polisario's public challenge, Van Walsum's departure could be seen as caving in to political pressure, and could weaken the UN's authority in the Western Sahara & elsewhere. The lack of UN action since the April MINURSO roll-over has resulted in uncertainty about the future of the UN-led talks, and may be read to indicate a lack of confidence by the UN in its own envoy. Both in New York and in Washington, the French told us that they support a fifth round in the Fall under Van Walsum's leadership. The Department believes additional international pressure on the Secretariat could convince the UN to reconsider its position.

15. (C) In the Department's view, Van Walsum has been an appropriately neutral negotiator who understands the dynamics of the relationships among the parties and takes a practical, realistic view of the limits of a possible resolution. His participation in a fifth round of talks would provide necessary continuity to the process, and his premature departure would undermine our efforts to secure a negotiated solution. Assuming a successor to Van Walsum could be identified in a reasonable timeframe, that individual may consider the UN's lack of support for his predecessor a disincentive to push the parties beyond the current stalemate, or to pursue autonomy as a compromise position at a time when some Sahrawis may be considering it (ref E). UNSCR 1813 expressed "strong support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy" and a "more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations." The Council has clearly expressed its support for Van Walsum as the SYG's envoy, and one party to the negotiations should not be allowed to veto that mandate or the SYG's choice of an envoy. If he is ultimately replaced, however, his successor should respect the Security Council's call for serious, realistic negotiations.

16. (C) The Department recommends that the SYG implement the instructions of UNSCR 1813 by inviting the parties to another round at the soonest opportunity. The Polisario relies in part on the UN and this process for its legitimacy, and we believe it will be under pressure not to spoil the process by declining to participate in a fifth round, even if it does not accept Van Walsum as

mediator.

-----  
Talking Points  
-----

¶7. (U) Posts may draw from the following talking points in delivering their demarche to host governments:

Begin points:

-- The United States is concerned about the lack of UN action on the Western Sahara since the April renewal of MINURSO's mandate. We plan to urge the SYG to implement the instructions of UNSCR 1813 by inviting the parties to a fifth round of talks at the earliest opportunity. These talks should be presided over by the SYG's Personal Envoy Peter Van Walsum.

-- The United States is concerned that the SYG may be giving undue credence to the Polisario's July 30 statement that the Polisario has "lost confidence" in Van Walsum, and we believe the UN as a result may be considering not renewing Van Walsum's contract when it expires on August 21.

-- Security Council Resolution 1813 expressed "strong support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy and "a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations."

STATE 00088765 003 OF 003

The Council has clearly expressed its support for Van Walsum, and one party to the negotiations should not be allowed to veto that mandate or the SYG's choice of an envoy.

-- The United States strongly believes that Van Walsum has been an appropriately neutral negotiator who understands the dynamics of the relationships among the parties and takes a practical, realistic view of the limits of a possible resolution, and he should be retained.

-- We are requesting all Security Council members approach the Secretariat at the highest levels to urge the UN to issue invitations for a fifth round of talks to be held as soon as possible but no later than the end of the year. We also request that Security Council members express their support to the Secretariat for retaining Van Walsum as the SYG's Personal Envoy.

(If host country believes strongly that Van Walsum should be replaced):

-- If Van Walsum's contract must expire, the United States still believes the UN needs to hold a fifth round of talks before the end of the year, to be facilitated by an appropriate UN official, possibly Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe.

End points.

-----  
POINT OF CONTACT  
-----

¶7. (U) Please contact IO/UNP action officer Joseph Fitzgerald at (202) 647-2641 or Morocco desk officer Randall Kaailau at (202) 647-1724 or via e-mail for any necessary further background information or argumentation.  
RICE